



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

November 16, 2009

To the President of the United States, President of the Senate, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives

I am pleased to submit the *Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) FY 2009 Performance and Accountability Report*. This report documents the progress VA made last year toward improving the timeliness, accessibility, and quality of health care and benefits that Veterans have earned through their sacrifice and service to our country. It also transparently describes the remaining challenges we face—challenges that we are aggressively tackling in order to strengthen the delivery of benefits and services consistent with Veterans' expectations. In addition, this report describes the quality of our data and the steps we have taken to safeguard sensitive information.

Despite the many accomplishments the Department achieved during FY 2009, we realize that fundamental changes must be implemented to transform VA into a 21st Century organization that is people-centric, results-driven, and forward-looking. We will soon publish a new strategic plan that charts the course for achieving the transformation necessary for us to meet our Nation's commitment to the men and women who have served this country in uniform.

This strategic road map includes a relentless focus on accountability for achieving results that will improve the lives of Veterans and their families, and we will accomplish this while applying business principles that will make VA more efficient and effective at every opportunity. Our new strategic goals and objectives are reflected in the individual performance plans of the senior executives in VA who are leading the key initiatives critical to achieving transformation. This linkage between organizational and employee performance will soon extend to performance plans for staff throughout the Department.

The entire Department is dedicated to serving the needs of Veterans in the 21st Century and every VA employee has a stake in transformation to meet those needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Eric K. Shinseki", is positioned above the printed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E".

Eric K. Shinseki